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Dale W. Malik

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AT&T Legal Department - AS

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EXAMINER

KIM, HEE SOO

ART UNIT

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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/686,345	<b>Applicant(s)</b> MALIK ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> HEE SOO KIM	<b>Art Unit</b> 2457	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 January 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12, 14 and 16-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12, 14 and 16-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                                | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                        | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

### **DETAILED ACTION**

This action is responsive to RCE filed on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

Claims 1~12, 14, and 16~22 are pending examination.

#### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 01/08/10 has been entered.

#### ***Response to Amendment***

Claims 1, 3, and 18 have been amended.

#### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1~12, 14, and 16~22 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 1~12, 14, and 17~22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Appelman et al. hereinafter Appelman (U.S 6,912,564) in view of Hickey et al. hereinafter Hickey (U.S 2002/0087646) and further in view of Gatz et al. hereinafter Gatz (U.S 2002/0049806).

Regarding Claim 1,

Appelman taught a communication method comprising the steps of:

providing a user profile having a collection of properties related to a user email folder, the user profile further having a collection of properties related to a user instant messaging (IM) account (Col. 10, Ln. 30~56, subscriber profile data of IM host complex 590; Profile server 5912 may communicate with servers in the OSP host complex 580 to share profile data; Col. 5, Ln. 40~45, OSP host complex supports email services, discussion groups, and other services; Col. 12, Ln. 53~65, folder attributes set by subscriber of the host system);

defining properties of the user email folder using the user profile (Col. 12, Ln. 53~65); and

defining properties of the user IM account using the user profile (Col. 10, Ln. 30~40); and

providing at least one interface for displaying the user profile, including the defined properties of the user email folder and the defined properties of the user IM account (Col. 10, Ln. 30~40, profile server is used to enter, retrieve, edit, manipulate or process subscriber profile data implying an interface is displayed to the user).

While Appelman taught an interface for users being able to set their email and instant messaging preferences in the subscription profile data, Appelman did not explicitly teach:

wherein the interface is further configured to provide at least one group email message corresponding to at least one group email folder, the group email folder configured such that members of a group associated with the group email folder have

access to the group email message, wherein the interface is further configured to provide an option to provide at least one user-specific email, the user specific email being different than the group email message, and wherein the group email message includes an access indicator for each member of the group, the access indicator configured to indicate which members of the group have accessed the group email message.

In an analogous art, Hickey taught a system and method for providing a group electronic mailbox that enables multiple users to work collaboratively and/or simultaneously with one or more communications received in the mail box (see Abstract), in which each electronic communication includes a status indicator that conveys the status regarding the associated one or more electronic mails to the members of the group, in which the status information includes read information, and also in which such status changes in response to acts of each member of the group. The system of Hickey provides status information including read information, acted upon information, and replied information [¶43]. Hickey further taught status indicators "showing the current status (e.g., New, Read, Answered, Moved, etc.) of an email message in the group mailbox". Hickey further taught that such status indicators allow the members of the group to obtain the status to messages within the group email folder regarding the other members of the group [¶79].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to combine the "references" of Hickey (as well as the other relied upon portions of Hickey) into the teachings of Appelman, in order to indicate

to each member of the group, through the use of the references, that a group message is stored in the group email folder and further allow members of the group to know whether or not such emails have been reviewed, acted upon, or replied to thereby allowing the members to selectively operate on such electronic communications (Hickey: ¶11) as well as notifying members or users of the group of any changes in status information of the received electronic communications, so that when a member of the group takes action on an received email, other members of the group can see what has been done (Hickey: ¶16)).

The combination of Appelman and Hickey did not explicitly state wherein a user type associated with a user is assigned, the user type being part of the group comprising an administrator, a guest, and a user having limited privileges and access.

Gatz taught an access server controls use of services in an account based access server and includes a database of users, a data structure associating users identified as parents with parent accounts, users identified as children with child accounts (abstract). More specifically, user account information 70 may be stored in the user account information database 220 of Fig. 2. Each parent accounts (“administrator”) 72 and 76 include each of the parents' data, settings, preferences, etc. Each of the child accounts (“user having limited privileges and access”) 74 and 78 include each of the children's data, settings, preferences, etc., as determined by the respective parent and as well as each of the children [¶57; Fig. 5]. Hence, by using the account control system, a parent can control the access and settings of the user of the child account as well as control selected preference settings of the child account. For example, the

parent can grant permission for the child to use the online services provided with the child account, control the information the child shares with others using the online services and can maintain and monitor the child account on an ongoing basis [¶58; ¶81; Fig. 17].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate, assigning a user type associated with a user is assigned, the user type being part of the group comprising an administrator, a guest, and a user having limited privileges and access, in order to obtain the predictable result of prohibiting inappropriate communication with users or controlled public resources over the Internet [Gatz: ¶11], thereby providing secure communication between users in a network.

Regarding Claim 2,

Appelman taught the step of providing the user profiles comprises:

assigning a user profile to a user (Col. 10, Ln. 30~56);

permitting the user assigned to the user profile to have access to the at least one user email folder associated with the user profile (Col. 10, Ln. 30~56, Col. 12, Ln. 53~65); and

While Appelman taught an interface for users being able to set their email and instant messaging preferences in the subscription profile data, Appelman did not explicitly teach permitting the user assigned to the user profile to have access to the group email folder.

In an analogous art, Hickey taught a system and method for providing a group electronic mailbox that enables multiple users to work collaboratively and/or

simultaneously with one or more communications received in the mail box (see Abstract), and in addition to each user typically having an individual mailbox as well as access to the group electronic mailbox [¶36].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to combine the "references" of Hickey (as well as the other relied upon portions of Hickey) into the teachings of Appelman, in order to indicate to each member of the group, through the use of the references, that a group message is stored in the group email folder. See motivation above.

Regarding Claim 3,

Appelman taught a communication method comprising the steps of:

assigning a user profile to a user (Col. 10, Ln. 30~56);

associating a user email folder with the user profile (Col. 12, Ln. 53~65); and

associating a user instant messaging (IM) account with the user profile (Col. 10, Ln. 30~56); and

defining properties associated with the user IM account as a function of the user profile (Col. 10, Ln. 30~40);

While Appelman taught an interface for users being able to set their email and instant messaging preferences in the subscription profile data, Appelman did not explicitly teach:

providing at least one interface for displaying the user profile, including the defined properties of the user email folder and the defined properties of the user IM account,



While Appelman taught an interface for users being able to set their email and instant messaging preferences in the subscription profile data, Appelman did not explicitly teach:

wherein the interface is further configured to provide at least one group email message corresponding to at least one group email folder, the group email folder configured such that members of a group associated with the group email folder have access to the group email message, wherein the interface is further configured to provide an option to provide at least one user-specific email, the user specific email being different than the group email message, and wherein the group email message includes an access indicator for each member of the group, the access indicator configured to indicate which members of the group have accessed the group email message.

In an analogous art, Hickey taught a system and method for providing a group electronic mailbox that enables multiple users to work collaboratively and/or simultaneously with one or more communications received in the mail box (see Abstract), in which each electronic communication includes a status indicator that conveys the status regarding the associated one or more electronic mails to the members of the group, in which the status information includes read information, and also in which such status changes in response to acts of each member of the group. The system of Hickey provides status information including read information, acted upon information, and replied information [¶43]. Hickey further taught status indicators "showing the current status (e.g., New, Read, Answered, Moved, etc.) of an email

message in the group mailbox". Hickey further taught that such status indicators allow the members of the group to obtain the status to messages within the group email folder regarding the other members of the group [¶79].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to combine the "references" of Hickey (as well as the other relied upon portions of Hickey) into the teachings of Appelman, in order to indicate to each member of the group, through the use of the references, that a group message is stored in the group email folder and further allow members of the group to know whether or not such emails have been reviewed, acted upon, or replied to thereby allowing the members to selectively operate on such electronic communications (Hickey: [¶11]) as well as notifying members or users of the group of any changes in status information of the received electronic communications, so that when a member of the group takes action on an received email, other members of the group can see what has been done (Hickey: [¶16]).

The combination of Appelman and Hickey did not explicitly state wherein a user type associated with a user is assigned, the user type being part of the group comprising an administrator, a guest, and a user having limited privileges and access.

Gatz taught an access server controls use of services in an account based access server and includes a database of users, a data structure associating users identified as parents with parent accounts, users identified as children with child accounts (abstract). More specifically, user account information 70 may be stored in the user account information database 220 of Fig. 2. Each parent accounts ("administrator")

72 and 76 include each of the parents' data, settings, preferences, etc. Each of the child accounts ("user having limited privileges and access") 74 and 78 include each of the children's data, settings, preferences, etc., as determined by the respective parent and as well as each of the children [¶57; Fig. 5]. Hence, by using the account control system, a parent can control the access and settings of the user of the child account as well as control selected preference settings of the child account. For example, the parent can grant permission for the child to use the online services provided with the child account, control the information the child shares with others using the online services and can maintain and monitor the child account on an ongoing basis [¶58; ¶81; Fig. 17].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate, assigning a user type associated with a user is assigned, the user type being part of the group comprising an administrator, a guest, and a user having limited privileges and access, in order to obtain the predictable result of prohibiting inappropriate communication with users or controlled public resources over the Internet [Gatz: ¶11], thereby providing secure communication between users in a network.

Regarding Claim 4,

Appelman taught further comprising:

defining properties associated with the user email folder as a function of the user profile (Col. 12, Ln. 53~65).

Regarding Claim 5,

Appelman taught defining properties associated with the user email folder comprises:

assigning a user name associated with the user (Col. 8, Ln. 59~66); and

assigning a password associated with the user name (Col. 8, Ln. 59~66).

Regarding Claim 6,

The combination of Appelman and Hickey taught substantially all the limitations of claim 4 however, failed to specifically teach wherein defining properties associated with the user email folder comprises: assigning a user type associated with the user.

Gatz taught an access server controls use of services in an account based access server and includes a database of users, a data structure associating users identified as parents with parent accounts, users identified as children with child accounts (abstract). More specifically, user account information 70 may be stored in the user account information database 220 of Fig. 2. Each parent accounts ("administrator") 72 and 76 include each of the parents' data, settings, preferences, etc. Each of the child accounts ("user having limited privileges and access") 74 and 78 include each of the children's data, settings, preferences, etc., as determined by the respective parent and as well as each of the children [¶57; Fig. 5]. Hence, by using the account control system, a parent can control the access and settings of the user of the child account as well as control selected preference settings of the child account. For example, the parent can grant permission for the child to use the online services provided with the child account, control the information the child shares with others using the online services and can maintain and monitor the child account on an ongoing basis [¶58; ¶81; Fig. 17].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate, assigning a user type associated with a user is assigned, the user type being part of the group comprising an administrator, a guest, and a user having limited privileges and access. See motivation of claim 3.

Regarding Claim 7,  
Appelman taught defining properties associated with the user email folder comprises:

assigning a collection of email folders to the user (Col. 11, Ln. 45~47).

Regarding Claim 8,  
Appelman taught assigning the collection of email folders to the user comprises:  
storing post office protocol 3 (POP3) server information for each email folder in the collection of email folders (Col. 5, Ln. 47~52).

Regarding Claim 9,  
Appelman taught assigning the collection of email folders to the user comprises:  
storing simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) server information for each email folder in the collection of email folders (Col. 5, Ln. 47~52).

Regarding Claim 10,  
Appelman taught properties associated with the user email folder comprises:  
storing email filter settings (Col. 12, Ln. 53~65).

Regarding Claim 11,  
Appelman taught defining properties associated with the user email folder comprises storing an address book associated with the user (Col. 14, Ln. 15~23).

Regarding Claim 12,  
Appelman taught storing the address book associated with the user comprises assigning address book settings to the address book (Col. 14, Ln. 15~23).

Regarding Claim 14,

Appelman taught defining properties associated with the user IM account comprises:

assigning a user name associated with the user (Col. 8, Ln. 59~66); and

assigning a password associated with the user name (Col. 8, Ln. 59~66).

Regarding Claim 17,

Appelman taught storing a contact list associated with the user (Col. 10, Ln. 30~40).

Regarding Claim 18,

Appelman taught a communication system comprising:

an Internet Service Provider (ISP) configured to provide (Col. 5, Ln. 29~30):

a user profile (Col. 10, Ln. 30~56);

a user email folder associated with the user profile (Col. 12, Ln. 53~65);

and

a user instant messaging (IM) account associated with the user profile (Col. 10, Ln. 30~56); and

an interface for displaying the user profile, including the defined properties of the user email folder and the defined properties of the user IM account (Col. 10, Ln. 30~40, profile server is used to enter, retrieve, edit, manipulate or process subscriber profile data implying an interface is displayed to the user).

While Appelman taught an interface for users being able to set their email and instant messaging preferences in the subscription profile data, Appelman did not explicitly teach:

wherein the interface is further configured to provide at least one group email message corresponding to at least one group email folder, the group email folder configured such that members of a group associated with the group email folder have access to the group email message, wherein the interface is further configured to provide an option to provide at least one user-specific email, the user specific email being different than the group email message, and wherein the group email message includes an access indicator for each member of the group, the access indicator configured to indicate which members of the group have accessed the group email message.

In an analogous art, Hickey taught a system and method for providing a group electronic mailbox that enables multiple users to work collaboratively and/or simultaneously with one or more communications received in the mail box (see Abstract), in which each electronic communication includes a status indicator that conveys the status regarding the associated one or more electronic mails to the members of the group, in which the status information includes read information, and also in which such status changes in response to acts of each member of the group. The system of Hickey provides status information including read information, acted upon information, and replied information [¶43]. Hickey further taught status indicators "showing the current status (e.g., New, Read, Answered, Moved, etc.) of an email message in the group mailbox". Hickey further taught that such status indicators allow the members of the group to obtain the status to messages within the group email folder regarding the other members of the group [¶79].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to combine the "references" of Hickey (as well as the other relied upon portions of Hickey) into the teachings of Appelman, in order to indicate to each member of the group, through the use of the references, that a group message is stored in the group email folder and further allow members of the group to know whether or not such emails have been reviewed, acted upon, or replied to thereby allowing the members to selectively operate on such electronic communications (Hickey: ¶11) as well as notifying members or users of the group of any changes in status information of the received electronic communications, so that when a member of the group takes action on an received email, other members of the group can see what has been done (Hickey: ¶16).

The combination of Appelman and Hickey did not explicitly state wherein a user type associated with a user is assigned, the user type being part of the group comprising an administrator, a guest, and a user having limited privileges and access.

Gatz taught an access server controls use of services in an account based access server and includes a database of users, a data structure associating users identified as parents with parent accounts, users identified as children with child accounts (abstract). More specifically, user account information 70 may be stored in the user account information database 220 of Fig. 2. Each parent accounts ("administrator") 72 and 76 include each of the parents' data, settings, preferences, etc. Each of the child accounts ("user having limited privileges and access") 74 and 78 include each of the children's data, settings, preferences, etc., as determined by the respective parent and



as well as each of the children [¶57; Fig. 5]. Hence, by using the account control system, a parent can control the access and settings of the user of the child account as well as control selected preference settings of the child account. For example, the parent can grant permission for the child to use the online services provided with the child account, control the information the child shares with others using the online services and can maintain and monitor the child account on an ongoing basis [¶58; ¶81; Fig. 17].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate, assigning a user type associated with a user is assigned, the user type being part of the group comprising an administrator, a guest, and a user having limited privileges and access, in order to obtain the predictable result of prohibiting inappropriate communication with users or controlled public resources over the Internet [Gatz: ¶11], thereby providing secure communication between users in a network.

Regarding Claim 19,  
Appelman taught the user profile is configured to define properties associated with the user email folder (Col. 12, Ln. 53~65).

Regarding Claim 20,  
Appelman taught the properties associated with the user email folder include at least an email filter setting (Col. 12, Ln. 53~65).

Regarding Claim 21,  
Appelman taught the user profile is configured to define properties associated with the user IM account (Col. 10, Ln. 30~40).

Regarding Claim 22,

Appelman taught the properties associated with the user IM account include at least a contact list (Col. 10, Ln. 30~40).

Claims 7 and 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Appelman in view of Hickey and further in view of 'Official Notice'.

Regarding Claim 16,

Appelman taught substantially all the limitations of claim 3 however, failed to specifically teach defining properties associated with the user IM account comprises: assigning a collection of IM accounts to the user.

Examiner takes 'Official Notice' (Wendorfer, 2004/0017396, see ¶43) that it was well-known to one of ordinary skill in the art for assigning a collection of IM accounts to the user as it would allow a user in one IM application to communicate with other users using different IM applications without the need to install separate IM applications.

***Conclusion***

**Examiner's Note:** Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings of the art and are applied to specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant in preparing responses, to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

In the case of amending the claimed invention, Applicant is respectfully requested to indicate the portion(s) of the specification which dictate(s) the structure relied on for proper interpretation and also to verify and ascertain the metes and bounds of the claimed invention.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to HEE SOO KIM whose telephone number is (571)270-3229. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday 8:00AM - 5:30PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ario Etienne can be reached on (571) 272-4001. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/H. K./  
02/09/10  
/YVES DALENCOURT/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2457

Application/Control Number: 10/686,345  
Art Unit: 2457

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